

armies of observation is well known ; they belong to the class of armed neutralities, like the ingenious invention of sanitary cordons. The fact is, that the 40,000 men assembled in Bohemia were destined to aid and assist the Russians in case they should be successful (and who can blame the Austrian Government for wishing to wash away the shame of the Treaty of Presburg ?). Napoleon had not a moment to lose, but his activity required no spur; he had hastened the battle of Austerlitz to anticipate Prussia, and he now found it necessary to anticipate Russia in order to keep Austria in a state of indecision. The Emperor, therefore, left Warsaw about the end of January, and immediately gave orders for engaging the Russian army in the beginning of February ; but, in spite of his desire of commencing the attack, he was anticipated. On the 8th of February, at seven in the morning, he was attacked by the Russians, who advanced during a terrible storm of snow, which fell in large flakes. They approached Preussich-Eylau, where the Emperor was, and the Imperial Guard stopped the Russian column. Nearly the whole French army was engaged in that battle — one of the most sanguinary ever fought in Europe.<sup>1</sup> The corps commanded by Bernadotte was not engaged in the contest; it had been stationed on the left at Mohrungen, whence it menaced Dantzic. The issues of the battle would have been very different had the four divisions of infantry and the two of cavalry composing Bernadotte's corps arrived in time; but unfortunately the officer instructed to convey orders to Bernadotte to march without delay on Preussich-Eylau was taken by a body of Cossacks; Bernadotte, therefore, did not arrive. Bonaparte, who always liked to throw blame on some one if things did not turn out exactly as he wished, attributed the doubtful success of the day to the

absence of Bernadotte : in this he was  
right; but to make his  
absence a reproach to that Marshal was a  
gross injustice :  
Bernadotte was accused of not having  
been willing to march  
on Preussich-Eylau, though, as it was  
alleged, General d'Haut-  
poult had informed him of the necessity  
of his presence^ But  
<sup>1</sup> Until Borodino. <sup>2</sup> See a previous foot note  
upon p. 36.